
The State of Food and Nutrition in Montana

2005-2006

Montana State Advisory
Council on Food and Nutrition

*Our Vision:
To lead and facilitate
the creation of an optimal
food and nutrition environment
for all Montanans*



A letter from the State Advisory Council on Food and Nutrition

March 14, 2006

The Honorable Brian Schweitzer
Governor of Montana
State Capitol
Helena, MT 59620

Dear Governor Schweitzer:

The State Advisory Council on Food and Nutrition is pleased to present you with the 2005-2006 State of Food and Nutrition in Montana. This report represents the final chapter in the Council's long and productive history, as it will become part of a larger initiative on family self-sufficiency. Since 1991, the mission of the State Advisory Council on Food and Nutrition has been to provide information, education and recommendations to policymakers, providers and the public on the status of food and nutrition in Montana. Council members include a broad-based representation from public and private food programs, nutrition programs, and the food industry.

The Council develops its annual report to highlight current food and nutrition issues facing Montanans. The Council also provides recommendations to the Department of Public Health and Human Services about food and nutrition programs in the state; policies that impact hunger and malnutrition; ways to promote food and nutrition programs within the private and agricultural sectors of Montana's economy; ways to educate the public about the strong relationship between nutrition and health; and realistic and long-term solutions to food and nutrition issues.

In 2005, the Council found that hunger and food insecurity are continuing to rise in our state. The roots of this problem are varied. Poverty has increased in the past four years, as has the number of children living in poverty. This problem is further aggravated by increases in utility, fuel, and food costs, which limit the funds families have available to meet basic food and nutritional needs. A growing number of working poor, young families, persons with disabilities, and seniors continue to use emergency food sites (such as food pantries) to meet daily food and nutrition needs. Potential cuts to public food programs further threaten food and nutrition resources and heighten the food insecurity of vulnerable families and individuals.

The report outlines the past and present accomplishments of the Council and its members. These accomplishments include providing nutrition education, expanding services and reducing barriers to participation in programs. The Council members' dedication and efforts to improve food and nutrition in the state are truly commendable.

The Council looks forward to assisting the state in any of its future efforts to eliminate hunger and improve nutrition in our state, to address the issues raised in this report, and ultimately to ensure a healthy future for all Montanans.

Thank you,

Minkie Medora
Co-Chair
Montana State Advisory Council on Food & Nutrition

Doug Blakley
Co-Chair

Table of Contents

The State of Food and Nutrition in Montana

Programs for Specific Populations*

- United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service 3

Programs administered by the Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS)

- Food Stamp Program 4
- Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) 5
- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) 6
- Aging Services 7
- Montana Nutrition and Physical Activity Program (NAPA) 8

Programs administered by the DPHHS Intergovernmental Health Services Bureau (IHSB)

- Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)
The Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) 9
- The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) 10

Programs administered by the Office of Public Instruction (OPI)

- School Nutrition Programs (SNP) 11

Programs administered by Montana State University Extension

- Food Stamp Nutrition Education (FSNE). 12
- Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) 13
- Food Safety 14

General Programs

- Montana Food Bank Network 15
- Montana Food Bank Network Food Policy Council 16
- Eat Right Montana (ERM) Coalition/Action For Healthy Kids (AFHK) 17

2005-2006 Food and Nutrition Awards 18

Advisory Council Members 19

*A low-income household with multiple needs may qualify for more than one of the nutrition assistance programs; however, eligibility criteria are different for each program. Applicants are encouraged to contact each program for more information.

The State of Food and Nutrition in Montana

This *State of Food & Nutrition in Montana* marks the final report of the Montana State Advisory Council on Food and Nutrition. Since its inception in 1991, the Council has made tremendous strides in forming collaborations and linkages between public and private food programs, understanding the services and needs of food programs, identifying the nutrition status of the state's high-risk populations, promoting local agriculture and community garden projects, assessing clients' nutrition in public institutions, and creating an awareness of food insecurity and hunger in Montana.

This report marks the final chapter in the long and illustrious history of the MT State Advisory Council on Food and Nutrition

Each year, the Council has prepared and presented a food and nutrition report to update the Governor, as well as the Department of Public Health & Human Services and the State of Montana, on the previous year's achievements and the needs that impact Montanans. As the final report in its long and illustrious history, the Council is proud to present the most current assessment of Montana's food and nutrition status, *The State of Food and Nutrition in Montana 2005-2006*.

The need for good food and adequate nutrition is increasingly severe. While food and nutrition programs have worked diligently to maximize efforts to reach those who need services, the economic, social and health constraints continuously erode much of these efforts. Lack of food has become a barometer for economic hardship in the state.

According to the 2004 Census report, Montana's poverty level is over 14%. Almost 20% of Montana's children under age 18 lived in poverty, and children under age 5 were at an even higher level of poverty. The state ranked 46th in median household income. Compared to other states in the Northwest, Montana had the highest rate of poverty. The Census report also showed that over 12% of the population was "food insecure," and of that number, almost 5% was "food insecure with hunger." Both children and adults living in poverty have difficulty accessing food in a sustainable manner that meets their nutrition needs.

The programs included in the document all strive to help address issues related to the increasing percentage of people living in poverty in Montana. Program participation improves recipients' nutritional status and reduces hunger. This positively benefits the local economy and creates jobs. Demands on services and benefits have increased in most programs, while funding is static or has decreased. Some of the highlights in this report are:

Common Program Needs

- Participation levels continue to increase for programs such as Food Stamps and the School Nutrition Programs. Increased participation, while necessary to meet the needs in the state, strains existing resources in each of these programs.
- Food and nutrition programs must continue to improve access, simplify enrollments, and maximize utilization of limited resources.

Nutrition and Physical Activity Education Needs

- To reach the goal of better health and improved nutritional status for all Montanans, programs are working to provide public education about good nutrition and physical activity. This education must be targeted to reach a diverse population that includes children, adults, and seniors.
- The rate of obesity among children is growing rapidly. Education efforts are targeting day cares, schools, and other educational centers. Schools with Nutrition Programs have a new requirement to develop and implement a school wellness policy, which could provide an opportunity to positively affect the nutritional status of children.
- Programs such as the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) recognize that low-income families with working parents have less time for food preparation and may have

unhealthy food intakes. The need continues for these families to develop skills to prepare healthy meals quickly and reduce use of high-fat, high-sodium, low-nutrient “fast” foods.

- The nutrition and health needs of people on reservations are critical to address. Although the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) could teach residents about nutrition, meal planning, and safe food handling, funding is not available for such education.

Reduced Funding – Cuts in Benefits and Services

- The current federal budget has severely reduced funding for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program for low-income seniors so the program will not be able to serve all those currently in the program. The Presidents’ proposed 2007 budget completely eliminates the program.
- Due to the increase in food insecurity and hunger, the demand for food through the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) has increased.
- As more soup kitchens and food pantries open, increased consumer demands on the limited commodity supplies cannot be met.

Food Insecurity and Hunger

In 2005, a study of 296 clients at food pantries and soup kitchens in the state was conducted by America’s Second Harvest. Although almost half the people surveyed were employed, almost 77% were experiencing food insecurity, and of this number, over 46% were dealing with severe hunger. In households with children under aged 18, 76% were food insecure. In households with seniors over the age of 65, 57% were food insecure.

Heat or Eat?

As Montana’s cost of living rises, people are constantly making the choice between buying food or spending money on heat, gasoline, medications, rent, or other essential needs. Money for food, especially healthful food, takes on a lower priority in these circumstances, resulting in more Montanans turning to supplemental and emergency food services.

Call to Action

Poor nutrition and lack of physical activity can increase Montanans’ risk of chronic disease. Healthcare costs and poor health ultimately can lead to other financial and family hardships. When poor nutrition is compounded by poverty and inadequate access to healthy, affordable foods, the long-term outlook for Montanans’ health may be impacted dramatically. Good nutrition protects the well-being of all Montanans and significantly impacts the state’s ability to manage the health and social costs of our residents. Good nutrition is the first line of defense against disease, crime, and social problems. This essential need costs less than dealing with the problems contributed to, and caused by, poor nutrition and food insecurity and cannot be overlooked.

It is the hope of this council that its work will have a positive impact on the state of food and nutrition in Montana. It is hoped that this essential role in communicating problems and solutions related to food and nutrition in Montana will continue in some form in the future.

Through a collaborative effort, Montana can positively impact the state of food and nutrition for its citizens. The Montana State Advisory Council on Food and Nutrition would like to thank everyone who supports efforts to end hunger and promote healthful lifestyles in Montana.

United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service

Program Description, Mission and/or Vision:

Vision: To lead America in ending hunger and improving nutrition and health.
Mission: To increase food security and reduce hunger in partnership with cooperating organizations by providing children and low-income people access to food, a healthful diet, and nutrition education in a manner that supports American agriculture and inspires public confidence.



The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) - Food and Nutrition Service oversees state agencies that administer a variety of Federal nutrition assistance programs to fulfill its vision and mission. Some of the primary programs include:

- The **Food Stamp Program** is the first line of defense against hunger for millions of families.
- The **Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)** provides commodity foods to low-income households living on Indian reservations and to Native American families living in designated areas near reservations.
- The **School Nutrition Programs**, including:
 - **National School Lunch Program** provides funding and commodity foods to non-profit food services in elementary and secondary schools, and in residential child care facilities.
 - The **School Breakfast Program** operates in more than 72,000 schools and institutions, serving a daily average of some 7.4 million children.
 - The **Summer Food Service Program** bridges the nutrition gap when school is not in session, providing meals to low-income children during school vacation periods.
 - The **Special Milk Program** furnishes milk to children in approved schools, camps, and childcare institutions that have no federally supported meal program.
- The **Child and Adult Care Food Program** supplies cash reimbursement for meals and snacks for eligible children and adults in day care centers, day care homes, and some homeless shelters.
- The **Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)** strives to improve the health of low-income pregnant women, breastfeeding and non-breastfeeding new mothers, and infants and children up to 5 years old by providing supplemental foods, nutrition education, and access to health services.
- The **Commodity Supplemental Food Program** distributes food directly to women, infants, children and elderly, with food packages tailored to the nutritional needs of participants.
- The **Emergency Food Assistance Program** provides commodity foods to States for distribution to supplement food stocks of households, soup kitchens, and food banks.

These programs are discussed in more detail on the following pages.

Target Populations: Low-income households.

For More Information:

Web site: www.fns.usda.gov/fns
Lynnae Bright, Officer-In-Charge
(406) 441-1196
Lynnae.Bright@fns.usda.gov

Bart Bushman, Mountain Plains Regional Community/Faith Liaison
(303) 844-0310
Bart.Bushman@fns.usda.gov

Programs administered by the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS)
Food Stamp Program

Program Description, Vision and/or Mission:

The Food Stamp Program is established to aid in ending hunger and to improve nutrition and health. It helps low-income households buy the food they need for a nutritionally adequate diet and provides crucial support to needy households in making the transition from welfare to work.

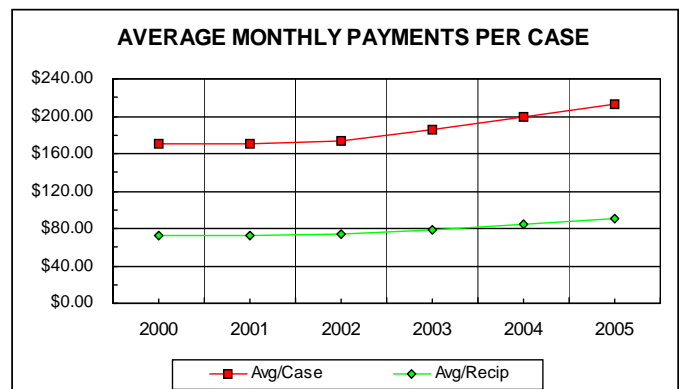
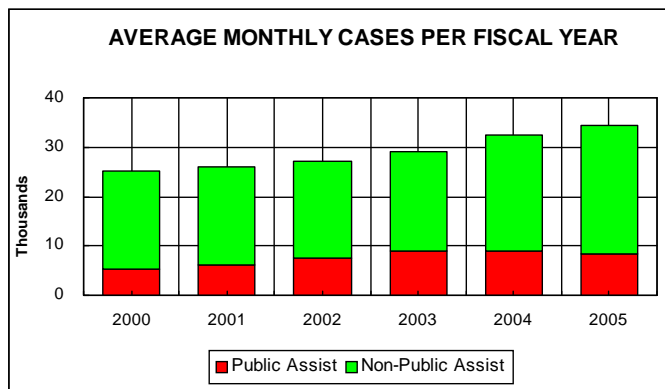
Target Populations: Low-income households.

Accomplishments:

- Won the Mountain Plains Region Summit Award for maintaining high payment accuracy while increasing program participation.
- Finalized the Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) disaster plan. In the event of a disaster, EBT cards can be distributed directly to individuals with benefits already attached.
- Sent letters to food stamp recipients with school-aged children to foster and facilitate participation in the School Nutrition Programs by simplifying access to free meals for children in households already certified to receive food stamps.
- Implemented a standard utility allowance policy, which allows a standard utility deduction for all households with a utility expense.
- In December 2005, began a new three-year eligibility span for Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDS). ABAWDS who exhausted their three months of allotted food stamp benefits in a three-year period may again apply for benefits.

Areas of Concern or Need:

- The average number of households per month receiving food stamp benefits increased almost 7% (from 32,544 households in State Fiscal Year 2004 to 34,778 households in State Fiscal Year 2005). This trend indicates an increasing number of needy households in Montana.



- Strive for performance bonus money by implementing strategies to improve payment accuracy, decrease error rate, increase participation, and increase application timeliness.
- Work with partners to improve program access and increase participation for eligible households.
- Increase outreach activities to increase Montana's participation rate.

For More Information:

Tammy Poppe
Food Stamp Program – Human Service Program Officer
(406) 444-9379
tpoppe@mt.gov

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

Program Description, Vision and/or Mission:

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children - better known as the WIC Program - serves to safeguard the health of low-income women, infants, and children up to age 5 who are at nutritional risk by providing:

- nutritious foods to supplement diets,
- information on healthy eating, and
- referrals to health care.

45% of Montana children under 5 years of age are provided with benefits through the WIC Program.

Target Populations:

The WIC target populations are low-income, nutritionally at risk:

- pregnant women (up to 6 weeks after birth or after pregnancy ends);
- breastfeeding women (up to infant's 1st birthday);
- non-breastfeeding postpartum women (up to 6 months after the birth of an infant or after pregnancy ends);
- infants (up to 1st birthday); and
- children up to their 5th birthday.

Accomplishments:

- In Federal Fiscal Year 2005, the average number of women, infants and children served per month in Montana WIC clinics was 20,919, which was slightly higher than the prior year.
- The WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (WIC FMNP) was operated in seven local agencies at eight farmers' markets. Funding remained static for the year while other states were cut.
- Scholarships were provided for local staff to complete college-level nutrition classes.
- Training was provided for local staff to become Certified Lactation Consultants.
- Electric breast pumps and manual breast pumps were distributed again this year.
- Ravalli County WIC Program operated the pilot Peer Breastfeeding Counselor Program and was funded for the continuation of the program in 2005.
- With a few exceptions, local programs have made arrangements for registered dietitian services for high-risk WIC participants.
- The Authorized Food List was revised to a picture list to reduce confusion among participants and retailers while insuring purchase of authorized WIC foods.

Areas of Concern or Need:

- Expansion funds are needed to increase the number of WIC participants served by the WIC FMNP.
- Continue to pursue Operational Adjustment funds to improve the level of nutrition education of WIC local agency staff.
- Support the continuation and expansion of the provision of breast pumps by WIC local agencies.
- Expand the Peer Breastfeeding Counselor Program to one or two selected sites in the next year.
- Maximize utilization of limited resources through the streamlining of the provision of WIC services throughout the state and the standardizing of documentation procedures.

For More Information:

Kim Mondy, RD
DPHHS – WIC Program
(406) 444-2841
kmondy@mt.gov

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

Program Description, Vision and/or Mission:

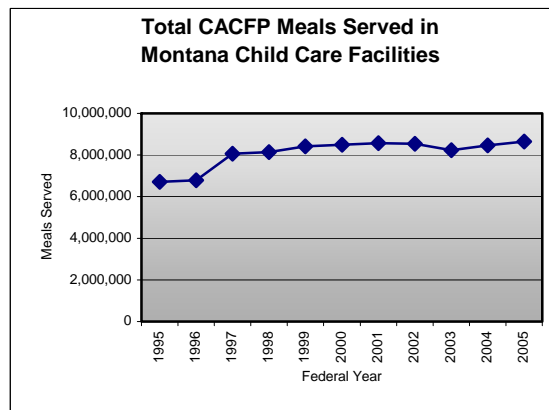
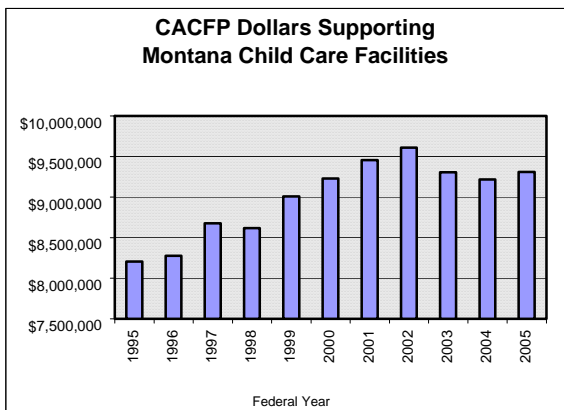
CACFP provides reimbursement for serving nutritious meals and conducts training for non-residential child and adult care organizations. CACFP's mission is to influence healthy lifestyle choices by facilitating program participation and compliance, funding nutritious meals, and providing effective training. The CACFP is funded by the USDA.

Target Population:

The CACFP primarily serves meals to children up to age 12 who are at or below 185% of the federal poverty levels.

Accomplishments:

- Recognized by the Mountain Plains Region of Food Nutrition Services as being 2nd for excellence in reporting accurate claim data for the FNS-44 Report of the Child and Adult Care Food Program.
- Received a "Victory Against Hunger" award from the Congressional Hunger Center. The Department of Public Health and Human Services was the first state agency to receive this award.
- Collaborated with the Montana Team Nutrition Program to create, publish, and disseminate the *CACFP Cycle Master Menu Volume 3: "Making It Balance and Kickin' It Up,"* based on the new 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- Received an Action For Healthy Kids grant to implement the school-aged physical activity program *ReCharge* in three child care programs.

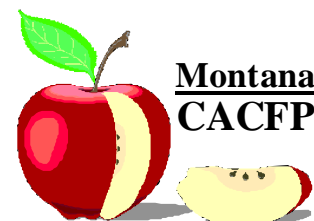


Areas of concern or need:

- Continue to develop strategies to educate CACFP participants and all Montanans about nutrition and physical activity as a way to defeat the obesity epidemic through our participation in the Cardiovascular Disease/Obesity Prevention Task Force.
- Continue the CACFP outreach efforts to increase the numbers of participating child care centers and day care homes in the CACFP.
- Maintain and strengthen our CACFP partnerships with the Quality Assurance Division/Licensing and the Child Care Subsidy Unit to provide seamless and cost-effective services to our mutual customers and educate parents about the benefits of early care.
- Implement the USDA's unfunded integrity mandates by developing alternative revenue strategies.

For More Information:

Camille Randall
Child and Adult Care Food Program
(406) 444-4086 or (888) 307-9333
crandall@mt.gov



Aging Services

Program Description, Vision and/or Mission:

- The Aging Services Bureau works with local Area Agencies on Aging, senior centers and other aging providers to deliver Elderly Nutrition Programs to elders 60 years of age and older.
- Nutrition programs offered through the Aging Network include congregate and home delivered meals, Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP), nutrition screenings and nutrition education.
- Nutrition programs are an essential component in helping seniors remain healthy, independent and in their homes.
- Meal programs are the lifeblood of senior center services. They are the largest programs the aging network provides. Combined, meal programs comprise over 50% of the overall aging budget.

For many seniors, congregate or home delivered meals represent a significant part of their overall nutritional intake.

Target Populations:

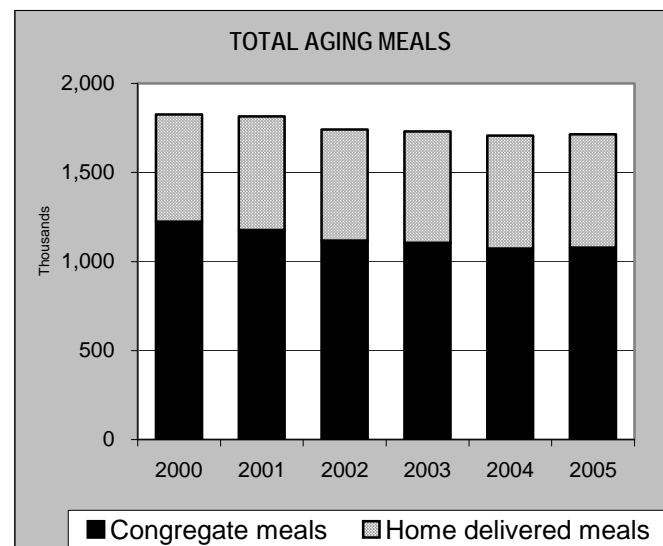
Clients who participate in these programs must be 60 years of age or older. The average age of congregate meal clients is 74, while the average age for home delivered clients has increased to almost 77.

Accomplishments:

- Served approximately 1.7 million meals in the last year to more than 34,000 Montana seniors.
- Served about 8,000 low-income seniors through the Commodity Supplemental Food Program and the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program in conjunction with the Indian Health Service and local area food banks.

Areas of Concern or Need:

- Despite increasing needs for subsidized senior meals, Federal and state funding for Aging Services programs has remained relatively static over the last 5 years.
- Less than half of the sites offer on-site meal service five days a week. Similarly, less than half of the sites offer delivery service to areas outside city limits.
- Increasing food, utility, fuel and operational costs for producing meals continue to impact the ability of these programs to serve meals, even though participants' voluntary contributions have increased.
- As a result of these factors, the viability of many senior centers and the meal programs they provide is increasingly precarious, especially in rural counties.



For More Information:

Doug Blakley
Aging Services
(406) 444-7787
dblakley@mt.gov

Montana Nutrition and Physical Activity Program

Program Description, Vision and/or Mission:

The purpose of the Montana Nutrition and Physical Activity (MT NAPA) Program is to improve the health and quality of life of Montana residents and to reduce health care costs by limiting the burden of chronic diseases associated with obesity. The Program focuses on preventing and reducing obesity by promoting evidence-based strategies and promising practices including: increasing physical activity; increasing fruit and vegetable consumption; increasing breastfeeding; and, promoting caloric balance.

MT NAPA promotes proactive solutions to help prevent chronic health problems.

Target Population:

Children (with a special focus on American Indian children) and adults in the workplace.

Accomplishments:

- Sponsored training on “Using Loving Support to Build a Breastfeeding-Friendly Community.”
- Delivered training on physical activity and nutrition to a variety of Montana associations/organizations, individual schools, and early childhood education agencies.
- Provided speakers on obesity and chronic disease prevention for two public health conferences and the Montana Cardiovascular Health Summit.
- Partnered with Eat Right Montana to issue fourteen \$500 mini-grants to schools and non-profit organizations to increase fruit and vegetable consumption.
- Committed in-kind staff support for efforts to increase physical activity opportunities for older adults and Montanans with disabilities.
- Provided four \$500 mini-grants to reservation-based organizations and Urban Indian Centers promoting healthy eating and physical activity.
- Served as lead sponsor of two “Defeating Diabetes” conferences in Billings and Great Falls addressing nutrition and physical activity needs and opportunities for American Indians.
- Funded initiatives in four communities to increase opportunities for walking and biking.
- Provided extensive training and funding to two city-county health departments participating in a pilot project promoting supportive nutrition, physical activity and breastfeeding policies in workplaces.
- Facilitated the production of a formative Montana obesity prevention plan to be published in 2006.

Areas of Concern or Need:

- Increase supports (such as peer support groups) for breastfeeding women to raise the breastfeeding duration rate up to the Healthy People 2010 objective.
- Promote affordable, sustainable strategies for building physical activity into daily life in communities (making them more “walk-able” and “bike-able”), worksites, schools, and households.
- Increase access to affordable fruits and vegetables for low-income residents.
- Reduce sweetened beverage consumption and “screen time” among children.
- Increase awareness of “portion distortion” and caloric balance strategies.
- Improve coordination and use of surveillance systems.

For More Information:

Ninia Baehr, Program Manager
(406) 994-5686
niniab@montana.edu

Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)

Program Description, Vision and/or Mission:

The Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) provides a monthly food package and assistance to participants. The program covers all areas of Montana through 59 distribution sites and is administered through DPHHS Intergovernmental Services Bureau (IHSB).

Target Populations:

Individuals 60 years of age and older whose income is at or below 130% of poverty; and children from five to six years old whose families qualify.

In 2006, 661 people must be dropped from this program due to cuts in funding.

Accomplishments:

- Increased participation by 455 slots in 2005 for a total of 7,183 participants per month.
- 81,948 food packages distributed from July 2004 through June 2005, which is an average of 110 more per month than the previous state fiscal year.
- Food packages distributed throughout 117 communities and their surrounding areas.

Areas of Concern or Need:

- 661 participants must be cut from this program in 2006 because of insufficient federal funding.
- Increased food package costs and cuts in federal funding may result in cuts to the client caseload.
- The President's proposed Federal Fiscal Year 2007 budget would eliminate funding of this vital service. There are over 20,000 seniors who are eligible for this program in Montana.
- Nutrition education and maintenance of waiting lists for the program are continuing needs.
- Promote awareness for the need to increase federal funding for this program.

The Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)

Program Description, Vision and/or Mission:

The Food Distribution Program on the Indian Reservation (FDPIR) was created as an alternative to the Food Stamp Program because many Native Americans live in remote areas where food costs are excessively high and access to food stamp offices and grocery stores is often limited. The USDA Food and Nutrition Service administers the FDPIR nationally. Each month, participating households receive a food package to help them maintain a nutritionally balanced diet. Participants may select from over 70 products, from fresh produce to flour. Households **may not** participate in FDPIR and the Food Stamp Program in the same month.

Target Populations:

Low-income American Indians and non-Indian households living within tribal reservation boundaries.

Accomplishments:

- Added commodities with less fat and sugar and offer greater variety and convenience of use. Commodity foods now include fresh fruits and vegetables.

Areas of Concern or Need:

- Nutrition education, food preparation training and food storage guidance are very important for the success of this program, but no funding is available under the grant to address those areas.

For More Information on CSFP or FDPIR: See contact information on page 10.

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)

Program Description, Vision and/or Mission:

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) provides commodity foods through select local organizations that either directly distribute to households or serve congregate meals, or distribute to other local organizations that perform these functions.

Target Populations:

- Low-income and/or homeless individuals and families.

Accomplishments:

- Through a contractual agreement with the Montana Food Bank Network, commodity foods were distributed to over 90 food banks and food pantries for providing nutritional assistance for home prepared and consumed meals.
- The state agency directly contracts with over 80 soup kitchens and charitable institutions for providing congregate meals.
- TEFAP received and distributed \$1,151,874 in commodity food products in 2005.

TEFAP distributed
over 1.1 million
pounds of
commodity food
items in 2005,
including fresh fruits
and vegetables.

Areas of Concern or Need:

- Participation levels at food banks, food pantries, and soup kitchens have reached all time highs while the federal funding for the TEFAP program has not increased.
- New soup kitchens and charitable institutions are requesting access to the program, putting further strain on a limited commodity inventory.
- Commodity inventories depend heavily on surplus and/or price stabilizing purchases by the Department of Agriculture that vary considerably from year to year.

For More Information:

Forest Farris
Food Distribution, Commodity Warehouse
(406) 447-4262
ffarris@mt.gov

Programs administered by the Office of Public Instruction (OPI)
School Nutrition Programs (SNP)

Program Description, Vision and/or Mission:

The Office of Public Instruction, School Nutrition Programs Unit administers seven USDA programs: National School Lunch, School Breakfast, Afterschool Snack, Special Milk, Summer Food Service, Food Distribution, and Team Nutrition.

- A total of 272 public and private non-profit school districts and residential childcare institutions with grades K-12 provide school meals in Montana.
- Participating schools receive federal meal reimbursement and commodity foods.
- School Nutrition Programs staff conducts monitoring, training and technical assistance to ensure compliance with program regulations and improve the school nutrition environment.
- School Nutrition Program's mission is to ensure that schools provide nutritious meals and promote healthy lifestyles through collaborative education and training and administration of the USDA's School Nutrition Programs.



In Montana, **74%** of schools provide healthful breakfasts to children through the School Breakfast Program.

Target Populations:

- School age children and families; school foodservice professionals and personnel (teachers, administrators, and business officials).

Accomplishments:

- In the 2004-05 school year, nearly 14 million lunches and 4 million breakfasts were served through the Montana School Nutrition Programs.
- The 2005 Summer Food Service Program served 156,811 total meals to needy children in Montana. There were 50 sponsors and 147 sites throughout the state.
- Through a USDA Administrative Reviews & Training Grant, increased monitoring and training/technical assistance efforts to help schools comply with administrative requirements.
- Implemented a new computer software program to increase program integrity and access to the School Nutrition Programs in Montana.
- Implemented a Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) training process to help schools comply with food safety planning mandated by the 2004 Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act.
- The Team Nutrition Program developed and distributed 500 copies of the *Healthy Kids Learn More* booklet featuring positive steps Montana schools are taking to create healthier schools.

Areas of Concern or Need:

- Continue to increase monitoring and training/technical assistance to improve program integrity. Improve access to technology by providing training and technical assistance.
- Address the obesity crisis by helping schools develop and adopt a School Wellness Policy.
- Need to provide menu planning training to meet the recommendations of USDA's *My Pyramid*.
- Continue to increase program access and participation among at-risk populations.

For More Information:

www.opi.mt.gov/schoolfood/index.html

Christine Emerson, Director

(406) 444-2502

cemerson@mt.gov



Programs administered by Montana State University Extension Service

The Montana State University Extension Service is an educational resource dedicated to improving people's lives by providing research-based knowledge to strengthen social, economic and environmental well-being of families, communities, and agricultural enterprises.

Montana Food Stamp Nutrition Education (FSNE)

Program Description, Vision and/or Mission Statement:

In partnership with the DPHHS Food Stamp Program, Montana State University Extension-Food Stamp Nutrition Education (FSNE) staff teaches nutrition education to the food stamp eligible audience in 21 counties and on six Indian reservations. FSNE provides programming to low-income individuals and households regarding healthy food choices, food safety, food resource management and physical activity.



Target Populations:

- Limited resource individuals and households who are receiving or are eligible to receive food stamps or commodities.
- Youth in Title I schools and in low-income after school and summer programs.

Accomplishments:

- Enhanced the effort to provide nutrition education to Montana's underserved reservation populations. Time was spent better understanding cultural differences, forming tribal college and tribal council relationships, reviewing Native American curricula from other states and introducing FSNE to these communities.
- State staff cooperated with other states for determining best practices.
- Montana FSNE was selected as one of three states to present research at the Food and Nutrition Service National Conference.
- Counties and reservations provided nutrition education to food stamp eligible youth, adults and senior populations in designated communities.
- Nutrition assistants/agents made 16,919 direct contacts (nutrition education lessons). Participants reported the following behavioral improvements:
 - 64% utilized a menu plan and shopping list
 - 56% comparison shopped more often
 - 20% increased their fruit and vegetable consumption
 - 77% washed their hands more often before touching food
 - 82% kept raw meat separate from other foods more often
 - 48% less often kept perishable food out more than 2 hours
- Distributed over 29,000 nutrition newsletters through partnering agencies.
- 1,798 children participated in nutrition education classes in Title I schools.

A critical skill for limited resource Montanans is to learn to use food resources with greater efficiency.

Areas of Concern or Need:

- Need more program exposure to encourage increased FSNE participation
- Continue agency collaboration to promote consistent messages to the public

For More Information:

Phyllis Dennee, Nutrition Education Specialist
Montana State University Extension
Phone: (406) 994-5702
pdennee@montana.edu

Renee Harris, FSNE State Coordinator
Montana State University Extension
Phone: (406) 994-6318
rharris@montana.edu

Montana Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)

Program Description:

Through the Montana State University Extension Service, EFNEP provides education to low-income families on purchasing and preparing food for their families in a nutritious manner with the money, food stamps, or other food resources they have available. A series of lessons is designed to teach both the adult and youth participants consistent, positive behavior changes in choosing more nutritionally sound diets, incorporating physical activity into their lives, and managing food budgets. Three sites in Montana offer EFNEP classes. Nutrition assistants and their supervising county Extension agents offer families and youth practical nutrition education.



Target Populations: Low-income families as well as youth in schools and out of schools

Accomplishments:

- Taught a series of lessons to 382 adult family members to help them stretch their food dollars to feed their families in a nutritious manner.
- EFNEP professionals and paraprofessionals have addressed child obesity in an effective, practical way by teaching over 980 low-income youth between the ages of 5 and 17 with lessons about healthier, low-cost food choices.
- EFNEP staff has worked closely with many community organizations to reach and teach those most in need of self-sufficiency skills.
- More than 92% of the EFNEP graduates improved their diets.
- After graduating from EFNEP, 30% of participants ran out of food less often before the end of the month.
- An EFNEP cost/benefit study in 6 states, including Montana, found that *for every dollar invested in EFNEP programming, \$8.82 in future health care savings resulted.* These savings are a huge positive impact for Montana.

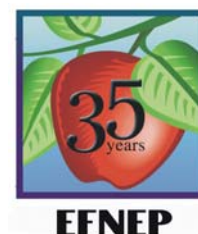
For every dollar
invested in EFNEP
programming, over
eight dollars in future
health care savings
resulted.

Areas of Concern or Need:

- More than 20% of all Montana children live in poverty, and food security is a problem for many of these children and their families.
- As more family members are employed, less time at home demands more information and skills directed to busy parents and children for tasty, fast foods on a low budget.
- As low-income families' heating and transportation costs rise, they are often forced to choose between heating and eating. Poor families tend to spend less on food to compensate for high energy costs, and children consume fewer calories. Skills for making food dollars stretch are imperative.

For More Information:

Phyllis M. Dennee, Montana EFNEP Coordinator
Nutrition Education Specialist
Montana State University Extension
406-994-5702
pdennee@montana.edu



Food Safety

Program Description, Vision and/or Mission:

The food safety education program is funded by the Montana State University Extension with a focus on the development and distribution of food safety materials for Montana communities and reservations. The mission of the program is to provide training and education to assure food safety, prevent food borne illness and to support economic development for Montana food producers and entrepreneurs.



Target Population:

- Native American food producers, Native American small meat processing facilities staff, and food vendors at Powwow or community events.
- Montana food safety educators such as County Extension agents, Family Consumer Science teachers, county sanitarians and others.

Accomplishments:

- Produced the *Celebrating Safe Food at Powwows* video to raise awareness of food safety at Powwow events. The video was used by tribal and Indian Health Service Sanitarians to teach food safety techniques to food vendors. Approximately 500 people viewed the video in the 2005 Montana Powwow season.
- Provided a 3-day combined Basic Meat Microbiology and tribally based and culturally appropriate HACCP Training. This course is designed for technical and production personnel responsible for food safety plans within meat processing facilities. Course content is currently being adapted to an interactive DVD format to share with other tribal communities and states.
- Partnered with key agencies to provide ongoing HACCP training to Montana schools.
- Provided *ServSafe* and *ServSafe Train the Trainer* Seminars across Montana.
- With MSU Animal and Range Science, developed a Food Labeling Course for meat producers and meat inspectors.
- Continued the Montana Food Safety Works program, a food safety education and work force preparation program for Montana high schools students, taught by local family consumer science teachers and county Extension agents.

Areas of Concern or Need:

- Continue Native American food safety training and support for food production.
- Continue training for Montana food business entrepreneurs.

For More Information:

Lynn Paul, EdD, RD
MSU Extension Food and Nutrition Specialist
(406) 994-5702
lpaul@montana.edu

General Programs

Montana Food Bank Network

Program Description, Vision and/or Mission:

The Montana Food Bank Network's mission is to work to eliminate hunger in Montana through food acquisition and distribution, education and advocacy. The goal is to help local agencies return to their original mission as a vital part of their community providing emergency food for households.



Target Populations:

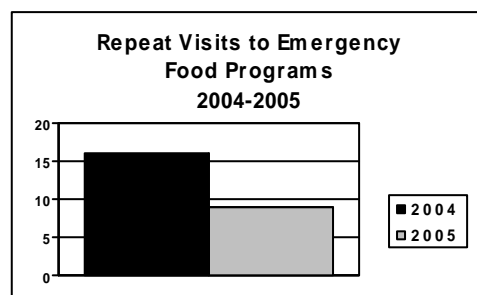
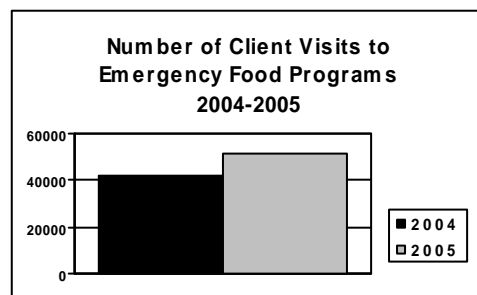
- Low-income people of all ages.

Accomplishments:

- On average, the agencies represented by the Montana Food Bank Network provide seven million pounds of food annually to feed hungry people in our state. This food is distributed direct to households through 154 local emergency food programs. Of the seven million pounds, including food provided by local retailers, growers and individual donors, approximately three million pounds is provided from the Montana Food Bank Network. The Network supplements what the agencies raise locally by accessing large national food donations through its association with America's Second Harvest, the Nation's Food Bank Network, and by processing local and national fresh food donations and bulk dry food donations at its cannery located at Montana State Prison.
- During 2005, the Canning Program produced almost 142,000 cans of fruits and vegetables; over 7,000 packages of frozen fish and wild game; and nearly 39,000 repackaged bags of cereal and pasta. Inmates work five days each week processing donated food that benefits local communities throughout Montana.
- The Network's Grocery Rescue Pilot Program through Albertsons provided over 300,000 pounds of nutritious food for emergency food programs in Missoula. This program will be duplicated in communities throughout Montana in the coming year.

Areas of concern or need:

- Although the average number of repeat visits decreased from 16 to nine times per year, the total number of clients served through emergency food programs increased from 2004, resulting in a continued need for food resources.
- While the client base increased in 2005, food donations decreased. Much of the donated food relied on in the past is no longer available due to manufacturers' improvements in packaging methods. Additionally, food available through the USDA Emergency Food Assistance Program has been cut, leaving agencies searching for food for their clients.
- As Montana's cost of living increases, more and more people are finding that local emergency food programs help them make ends meet.



For More Information:

The Montana Food Bank Network
(406) 721-3825 or (800) 809-4752.
endhunger@montanafoodbanknetwork.org
www.montanafoodbanknetwork.org

Montana Food Bank Network Food Policy Council

Program Description:

The Food Policy Council (FPC) is the advocacy committee of the Montana Food Bank Network (MFBN). Members of the council work in partnership with other advocacy groups, the state food stamp director, representatives of the MFBN board, staff, as well as Congressional representatives. The FPC is a member of the Western Anti Hunger Consortium, a group representing 10 western region states working to improve food security.

Target Population:

- Low-income people of all ages who are in need of food security through various programs.

Accomplishments:

- Led effort for the successful passage of Senate Bill 29, a bill to reinstate food stamp and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits for people with drug felonies.
- Worked collaboratively with multiple social and human service agencies to influence the federal budget process through the Montana congressional delegation.
- Released the first “Hungry in Montana” report to law makers, local leaders and the public.
- Established two new “Kids Cafes” in collaboration with the Boys & Girls Clubs in Wolf Point and Miles City.
- Supported efforts to implement changes in the Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act of 2004.

Areas of Concern and Need:

- 2004 US Census report on Food Security indicates that over 47,000 families in Montana are not food secure.
- Poverty level for the state is 14.2% while the level for children under 18 is at almost 20%.
- Montana ranks 46th in the nation in Median Household income based on the 2004 Census report.
- Based on the “Hungry in Montana” survey, food insecurity continues in many areas of the state.
- Participation in leading food assistance programs has not reached all who are eligible for these programs.
- People receiving food stamps are the poorest of the poor (many living at 50-60% of poverty), and therefore continue to live with food insecurity.
- Increased cost of home heating, along with low wages, fixed incomes, lack of health insurance, disability, rent and transportation costs all deplete money available to buy food that is adequate and meets the family’s nutrition needs.

Over **47,000** families in Montana are food insecure and the state ranks **46th** in median household income.

For More Information:

Minkie Medora or Kate Bradford
Montana Food Bank Network
(406) 721-3825
medora@bigsky.net

Eat Right Montana Coalition (ERM)

Program Description, Vision and/or Mission:

The purpose of this coalition is to promote health for all Montanans through a variety of activities that encourage optimal nutrition, fitness, and wellness. Eat Right Montana (ERM) emphasizes collaboration in order to meet its goals and has a diverse range of partners interested in nutrition and physical activity.

- ERM's *vision* is optimal health through nutrition, fitness and wellness for all Montanans.
- ERM's *mission* is to endorse and support efforts to improve Montanans' health through nutrition and fitness; promote the vision of ERM; develop, disseminate and market ERM themes and educational campaigns; and seek collaborative partnerships.
- Montana Action for Healthy Kids (MTAFHK), a subcommittee of Eat Right Montana Coalition, is dedicated to improving the health and wellness of our children in schools and communities through nutrition and physical activity. Billings Action for Healthy Kids is a local team actively supporting Yellowstone county schools to create healthier environments.



Target Populations:

- All Montanans (children, families, and adults).

Accomplishments:

- Developed and distributed the *Healthy Families* Media Packet containing up-to-date nutrition and physical activity messages to more than 150 Montana media outlets and 100 public agencies nationwide.
- Partnered with Montana Nutrition and Physical Activity Program (MT NAPA) to offer fourteen mini-grants to promote fruit and vegetable consumption.
- Partnered with Big Sky State Games to provide accurate nutrition information to participants. This effort reached over 5,840 adults and children at the *Shape Up Montana and Big Sky Fit Kids* statewide challenges.
- Partnered with Montana Dietetic Association (MDA) to provide healthful living and school wellness information to Montana legislators during the 2005 legislative session.
- Through support from an Action for Healthy Kids grant, developed and distributed more than 150 copies of the *Taking Action for Healthy Kids Idea Guide* to parent teacher organizations.
- Supported the Billings Action for Healthy Kids Team by providing training and technical assistance to Billings schools.

Areas of Concern or Need:

- Continue collaborative efforts in health promotion and disease prevention through education, school-based projects and community activism.

For More Information:

Mary Hernandez, Chair
Eat Right Montana Coalition
(406) 238-3625
mhernandezmhf@qwest.net

Katie Bark, Co-Chair
(406) 994-5641
kbark@mt.gov

Lisa Linday, Co-Chair
(800) 322-3634 ext. 3380
fborli@fmdh.org



2005-2006 Food and Nutrition Awards

The Advisory Council on Food and Nutrition has recognized the following individuals for their outstanding activities in the past year that have significantly contributed to the reduction of hunger and the improvement of nutritional status in Montana.

- **Jeri Rittel**, Helena, for her work introducing nutritious foods to the students who attend Project for Alternative Learning (PAL) in Helena.
- **Jim and Joanne Cortese**, Butte, for their time and energy spent coordinating with other agencies to maximize the services offered by the Butte Food Bank.
- **Elaine Way**, President of the Deer Lodge Food Pantry, for her countless volunteer hours spent establishing the Food Pantry as well as spearheading the efforts to ensure that no one goes hungry in Powell County.
- **Christine Emerson**, Director of School Nutrition Programs, Office of Public Instruction, Helena, for her efforts and leadership resulting in an increase in the number of schools that provide a nutritious breakfast, summer lunch, and after school snack to their students.
- **Melba Anderson**, MSU Extension Food Stamp Nutrition Education (FSNE) Nutrition Assistant in Roosevelt County, for providing nutrition education classes that help the food stamp recipients develop skills and behaviors leading to improved nutritional well-being and an increased ability to manage resources.
- **Aaron Brock**, Food Stamp Outreach Specialist with the Missoula Food Bank, for his efforts assisting homeless individuals and elders with their USDA food stamp applications and for engaging University of Montana students in a food stamp public marketing campaign.
- **Tom Lipp and Helena Middle School's Montana Behavioral Initiative Team (MBI)** for their work instituting numerous innovative changes to the lunch policy at Helena Middle School that recognized the nutritional needs of middle school students.
- **Marilyn May**, MSU Extension Food Stamp Nutrition Education (FSNE) Nutrition Assistant in Custer County, for meeting the educational needs of her diverse client population, ranging from persons with a developmental disability to high school students to adults, when providing nutrition education training.
- **Katie Appel-Goble**, Missoula Hellgate Elementary School Food Service Director, for effectively using USDA commodity foods that, in turn, helped decrease food costs in her food service operation.
- **Marsha Wartick**, Ronan School District Food Service Director, for implementing eye-appealing fresh fruit breakfast and lunch salad bars for middle and high school students.

Council Members

Montana State Advisory Council on Food and Nutrition Member List

Senior Nutrition

Doug Blakley
DPHHS - Aging Services
111 Sanders, Room 210
Helena MT 59604
Phone: (406) 444-7787
Fax: (406) 444-7743
dblakley@mt.gov

MSU Extension

Phyllis Dennee
Montana State University Extension
101 Romney Gym
Bozeman MT 59717
Phone: (406) 994-4581
Fax: (406) 994-7300
pdennee@montana.edu

WIC

Kim Mondy
DPHHS – Nutrition Section
Cogswell Building, 1400 Broadway
Helena MT 59620
Phone: (406) 444-2841
Fax: (406) 444-0239
kmondy@mt.gov

School Nutrition

Christine Emerson
School Nutrition Programs
Office of Public Instruction
P.O. Box 202501
Helena MT 59620-2501
Phone: (406) 444-2502
Fax: (406) 444-2955
cemerson@mt.gov

Food Bank

Peggy Grimes
Montana Food Bank Network
5625 Expressway
Missoula MT 59802
Phone: (406) 721-3825
Fax: (406) 542-3770
pgrimes@montanafoodbanknetwork.org

Advocacy

Minkie Medora
Food Policy Council
Montana Food Bank Network
5625 Expressway
Missoula, MT 59808
406-549-3413
406-721-3825
medora@bigsky.net

Food Distribution

Forest Farris
DPHHS - Food Distribution
Commodity Warehouse
1400 Carter
Helena MT 59601
Phone: (406) 447-4262
Fax: (406) 447-4287
ffarris@mt.gov

Food Industry

Lynn Paris
Healthcare Business Development
and Training Manager
Sysco Food Services of Montana
1509 Monad Road, P.O. Box 31198
Billings MT 59107
Phone: (406) 247-1168
Fax: (406) 247-1975
paris.lynn@mt.sysco.com

Montana Department of Agriculture

Angelyn DeYoung
303 North Roberts
Helena MT 59620
Phone: (406) 444-2402
Fax: (406) 444-9442
adeyoung@mt.gov

Health Promotion

Crystelle Fogle
DPHHS – Cardiovascular Health
Program
Cogswell Building, 1400 Broadway
Helena MT 59620
Phone: (406) 947-2344
Fax: (406) 444-7465
cfogle@mt.gov

Public Assistance

Tammy Poppe
DPHHS - Food Stamp Program
111 North Jackson
PO Box 202925
Helena, MT 59620-2925
Phone: (406) 444-9379
Fax: (406) 444-2547
tpoppe@mt.gov

USDA-Food & Nutrition Service

Lynnae Bright
10 W. 15th St., Ste. 1500
Helena MT 59626
Phone: (406) 441-1190
Fax: (406) 441-1195
lynnae.bright@fns.usda.gov

Child & Adult Care Food Program

Ann Hagen-Buss
DPHHS - CACFP
111 North Jackson
PO Box 202925
Helena, MT 59620-2925
Phone: (406) 444-2674
Fax: (406) 444-2547
ahagenbuss@mt.gov

Peer Advisor/Low-Income

Mary Millin
Peer Advocate
Summit Independent Learning Ctr.
316 N. 3rd
Hamilton, MT 59840
Phone: (406) 363-5242
Fax: (406) 375-9035
marylou121@msn.com

The Montana State Advisory Council on Food and Nutrition would like to express their deep appreciation to Kim Pullman R.D., Office of Public Instruction, for her immense efforts in putting this report together.

For more information on the work of the Montana State Advisory Council on Food and Nutrition, contact the chair, Doug Blakley, at (406) 444-7787, Helena, Montana. This report can be viewed on-line at www.opi.mt.gov/schoolfood/index.html.

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Montana State Advisory Council on Food and Nutrition
c/o Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
Doug Blakley
Aging Services
111 North Sanders
Helena, MT 59620

